

Building Consensus for Watershed Management



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Notes 4

Environmental Management



Citizens expect their local governments, even with their meager budgets, to lead in protecting their water supply and control floods. Thus, watershed management programs that harness resources from various concerned sectors have to be developed.

A Balancing Act

Many people want to be involved in making decisions about watershed areas. These include users of forest products, indigenous people, upland farmers, irrigators' associations, water districts, mining ventures, sand and gravel capitalists, laborers, and real estate holders among others. While harvesting forest resources can generate employment and additional income, many communities want to protect their watershed areas to ensure sustained water supply and prevent floods.

With the present situation, local government units (LGUs) need a framework for sustainable watershed management that incorporates environmental conservation into economic activities. Without a framework that generates proactive programs, watershed areas become vulnerable to external interventions such as inappropriate mining operations, land use conversion that promote the excessive use of pesticides, residential subdivisions, and poorly-managed landfills that affect water supply and cause environment degradation.

Local governments, with the support of the private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous people, scientific institutions, cooperatives, and entrepreneurs, where appropriate, should undertake properly coordinated activities that lead to consensus. Consensus on how watershed areas should be managed is the basis for developing sustainable action programs. Local governments and communities need to come up with practical methods to jumpstart an otherwise time-consuming and costly consensus-building process.

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Technology

Basic Steps to Consensus Building

To guide consensus building, your LGU can take the following steps:

Organize a task force to gather and organize information on the target watershed area and the people who depend on it. Read [Local Governance Technical Notes on Watershed Management \(LGTN-WSM\) Notes 2-1999 on Delineating Boundaries of the Watershed Important to the Community](#) and [LGTN-WSM Notes 3-1999 on Knowing the Characteristics of the Community Watershed](#) for more information on data gathering and organizing for decision making.

Through an information gathering process, identify key sectors and know their respective views. Some of them contribute to watershed problems, others are affected by them, and still others are intermediaries concerned with public welfare. Identify sectoral leaders who can best represent and assist their sector in articulating their views before a multi-sectoral gathering.

Identify the appropriate group for reaching consensus. An existing multi-sectoral body could be one approach. However, it is often beneficial to hold

the first special session outside the confines of mandated bodies so that more people can participate.

A multi-sectoral workshop conducted by a skilled facilitator and leaders of all key sectors will further clarify issues. In situations of intense conflict, a skilled facilitator who can help clarify contentious points is a must. Use innovative group discussion processes such as the Technology of Participation (ToP). A two- to three-day workshop should have the following objectives: a) enable stakeholders to understand the current situation; b) motivate sectors to take action based

on shared information on policies that provide incentives and practices that work; and c) agree on values, strategies, and priority doable actions to be taken over a one- to five-year timeframe.

Assign the task force to prepare and communicate the workshop proceedings to all concerned sectors and, where appropriate, prepare memoranda of agreement among concerned parties.

Ask the task force and other concerned local government staff to translate the results of the workshop into an action program to be incorporated in the Annual Investment Plan (AIP).



A multi-sectoral workshop among representatives from all concerned sectors clarifies issues regarding the watershed.

Technology of Participation

Technology of Participation (ToP) is a facilitation method already used by numerous local governments. It provides practical tools that enable highly energized, productive and meaningful participation in key decision-making processes.

When used as a tool in consensus building, ToP utilizes: a) a set context and focus question; b) brainstorming using idea cards to generate ideas individually, in small groups, and in plenary; c) clustering idea cards to form new relationships and group similar brainstorm ideas; and, d) titling of idea clusters to discern collective insights and articulate group consensus. The results are decisions and outcomes that every participant owns.



Process flow of a Consensus Building Workshop on WSM using ToP.

A workshop using ToP also: a) allows a large number of participants, which means more owners of the resulting program; b) handles a heterogeneous group; c) allows active individual participation; and d) maintains participants' enthusiasm and interest levels through quick-paced activities. A two-day workshop includes: a) Current Reality Dialogue, where participants build consensus and share insights on the overall development situation in the community; b) Shared Practical Vision in which a practical and forward-looking vision of the program is shaped; c) Strategic Direction Setting where specific priority actions are decided on; and d) One- to three-year Activity Plan.



Policy and Practice

Enabling Framework

RA 7160, the Local Government Code, in Sections 2 and 26 mandates national agencies to consult local governments before implementing projects with potential environmental impact. Section 35 mandates local governments to work closely with nongovernmental sectors in planning and managing natural resources such as watershed areas.

There are regulations on the creation of multi-sectoral bodies mandated to prepare unified programs or

oversee discrete geographic areas. The National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) law mandates a Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB) for each environmentally sensitive or protected area. DENR AO 99-01, which implements RA 7160, provides for the creation of multi-sectoral bodies to oversee implementation of devolved functions in forest and watershed management.

Presidential Decree No. 1151 and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Admin-

istrative Order 96-37 require consultation with local governments before Environmental Clearance Certificates (ECCs) are issued by the national government for projects which will affect local resources such as municipal watershed areas. Other national laws like the Mining Law and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) require any project proponent, whether public or private sector, to conduct consultation with local communities before implementing projects.

Practices That Are Working

The Barobbob watershed, the source of water for the capital town of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, became a pressing concern of the provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya when a dispute on agricultural practices and water supply for irrigation arose between upland and lowland farmers. The conflict

led to protest rallies organized by the local irrigators' association.

To address the situation, the provincial government together with the Bayombong municipal government conducted consultations separately with various stakeholders. These consultations culminated in a multi-sectoral workshop attended by a

large group of sectoral representatives. The workshop facilitator used ToP techniques that kept every participant enthusiastically involved.

The workshops identified approaches that emphasized building agreements among stakeholders for changes in watershed resource utilization, and the rights and duties associated with use of land, water, and forest. The irrigators association committed to take part in rehabilitation of the watershed by participating in tree planting activities.

The workshop helped develop appropriate incentive schemes and regulatory measures, including tenurial arrangements which provided stakeholders a favorable environment for participation. With a co-management agreement initiated by the provincial government, upland farmers agreed to organize to protect the forest and engage in ecologically sound farming practices.

The provincial government undertook the strengthening of its watershed management support programs and the building of staff capabilities to improve services. Forest fires have stopped and new entrants to the watershed have been minimized.



The Provincial Government of Nueva Vizcaya and the Municipal Government of Bayombong conducted consultations among stakeholders on Barobbob watershed conservation.



LGU Action Agenda

Other Initiatives

Technology of Participation (ToP) has been used to address watershed management concerns in about 20 municipalities nationwide. Workshops using ToP have helped communities inspire and organize

citizens, partner institutions, and national government agencies. These workshops allowed local governments to identify and take immediate action to protect watershed areas without major external donor

funding. Notable cases include Naga City, Malolos in Bulacan, Dumarao in Capiz, Lantapan in Bukidnon, Arakan in Cotabato, and Maitum in Sarangani.



The Malolos Flood Control Program in Bulacan was formulated by a planning workshop using ToP to prime technical discussions among different agencies.

What You Can Do

1. Check who the stakeholders are in your watershed. Who contributes to the problem? Who are affected? Who are intermediary groups concerned with the public good?
2. Organize a task force to discuss and plan a workshop using ToP to build consensus on managing the watershed and invite stakeholders.
3. Check out local governments and other institutions that used ToP to run workshops in environmental management, and learn from their experiences.

Resources and References

For information on participatory approaches in developing watershed management programs, you may contact the Office of the Governor in the following provinces: Bukidnon, Tel. (088) 841-2523; Bulacan, Tel. (044) 791-5150; Nueva Vizcaya, Tel. (078) 321-2551; and Sarangani, Tel. (083) 552-2393.

For additional information, you may also call the Office of the Mayor in Naga City, Tel. (054) 811-1288 or (05421) 732-2240. You may also write to the Office of the Mayor in these municipalities: Dumarao, Capiz; Lantapan, Bukidnon; and Maitum, Sarangani.

For information on facilitators using ToP, contact any of these Centers for Local Governance (CLGs):

- Bulacan State University–Institute of Local Government Administration, Malolos, Bulacan, Tel. (044) 791-0153 c/o Dr. Modesta Lugos
- Divine Word College–Research Center, Tagbilaran, Bohol, Tel. (038) 411-3658 c/o Ms. Cynthia Ayco
- [Gerry Roxas Foundation](#), Dayao, Roxas City, Tel. (036) 621-1922 c/o Ms. Annie Villaruz

Selected local government staff and NGOs in Nueva Vizcaya, Bulacan, Naga City, Bohol, Negros Oriental, and Cotabato are also involved in participatory watershed management planning. You may write them for more information.

For resource organizations called on to mediate conflicts, you may contact Community Organization, Training, and Research Advocacy Institute (COTRAIN) at telephone (02) 926-6755 or 434-7038, or Tanggol Kalikasan, [Haribon Foundation](#) at telephone (02) 925-3332. The [DENR](#) legal division also can assist you in conflict management. The local DENR offices can provide information on technical issues or other resource organizations involved in watershed management.